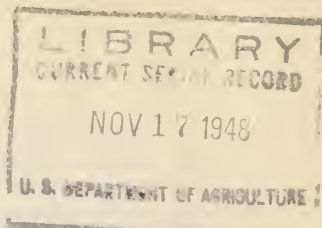


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### CONSUMER GUIDES FOR BUYING AND KEEPING EGGS

Consumers who know where to buy eggs, how to check on their quality and size, and how to keep them are likely to have eggs of the quality they prefer at all times.

"Where to buy eggs" is a question that all consumers, whether homemakers or large-quantity buyers, must answer to their own satisfaction. They can find a satisfying answer if they will buy from dealers who know egg quality, who buy high-quality eggs for their customers, and who keep eggs under proper conditions.

Every consumer needs to understand how the conditions under which eggs are kept affect their quality. Eggs require a cool, clean storage place that is not too dry. Refrigeration that holds a temperature above the freezing point but preferably not above 45° F., and that has a humidity around 85 percent or higher, is ideal for conserving egg quality.

Eggs left for 4 days in a warm store or kitchen (temperature between 70° and 80° F.) lose as much "freshness" as eggs kept for several weeks in the refrigerator in a covered container. Where the temperature is around 90° F., typical of many stores and kitchens in the summer, loss in quality occurs much more rapidly.

#### Noting How the Dealer Cares for Eggs

With these facts in mind, the homemaker assures herself; That the retailer keeps the eggs in his store in a cold, sanitary refrigerator; that he calls attention to eggs with posters and empty cartons instead of with bulk or advertising displays of eggs which lose quality out of refrigeration; and that sanitary conditions of the store as a whole are satisfactory.

#### Reading the Label

Next the homemaker directs her attention to the grade labeling, which is the best guide to the quality of eggs at the time of purchase. She notes all information -- on the sticker that seals the carton, and on the carton itself. For eggs officially graded according to U. S. Standards, she will find information covering the quality or grade (AA, A, B, or C), the size of the eggs based on weight per dozen, and the date the eggs were graded. The grade label is an assurance of quality after the date of grading only if the eggs have been kept under proper conditions.

Size and interior quality are independent of each other, so the grade label information on officially graded eggs may read: U.S. Grade A, Extra Large; U.S. Grade A, Medium; U.S. Grade B, Large; U.S. Grade A, Large; U.S. Grade AA, Large; U.S. Grade B, Medium, or carry another combination of terms that describes quality and defines weight per dozen. Eggs that are not graded officially, under either Federal or Federal-State programs, cannot carry the letters "U.S." before the grade designation on the label.

Some States use their own grades and grading programs, which usually are similar to the Federal or Federal-State programs. The homemaker who buys eggs graded under a State program should be familiar with the egg grades and the labeling requirements of that State.

This emphasis on uniform standards in grading and labeling eggs does not mean that trade brands should not also appear on the carton. Many progressive firms apply uniform standards for quality in grading their eggs. They label their cartons with trade-mark terms or brand names that identify the different qualities they sell. The consumer learns to associate such trade-mark terms or brand names with the quality and weight of the eggs contained in the cartons. Descriptive grade labeling combined with a trade brand which the consumer knows gives her added confidence in making her purchase.

The homemaker who buys eggs from bulk displays or in cartons carrying only such descriptive terms as "selected" or "best" or "fresh country eggs" has to depend entirely on the dealer for her assurance of quality. Eggs so labeled often vary widely in quality.

#### Checking on Weight in Relation to Size

Reading the label when selecting eggs is important, but checking at home to see how well the eggs agree with their description is just as important. To check weight in relation to size, the consumer needs these facts: According to U.S. weight classes, a dozen "Extra Large" eggs must weigh at least 27 ounces without the carton; cartons usually weigh about 2 ounces. "Large" eggs must weigh at least 24 ounces per dozen; "Medium," 21 ounces; "Small," 18 ounces.

In the late summer and early fall, retail stores often have an abundance of "Small" eggs and some "Peewee" eggs (the latter weighing at least 15 ounces per dozen). These small and very small eggs may be an unusually good buy. This seasonal abundance occurs because the pullets (young hens) in the flock normally produce very small or small eggs for a few weeks when they first begin to lay. Both young and mature hens may produce unusually large eggs at times--even "Jumbos" weighing 30 ounces or more per dozen. A limited number of Jumbo eggs may appear in some stores now and then. It is to the consumer's advantage to understand the six weight classes on which egg sizes are based, even though most of the year the stores have only extra large, large, or medium-size eggs.

### Checking on "Good Buys"

In checking on good buys, the consumer relates size (or weight) and grade (or quality) to price. In some sections of the country it pays also to consider shell color in relation to price.

Within the same grade there is often a wide spread between the retail prices of small, medium, and larger eggs. Allowing for differences in weight, the smaller eggs have the same food value as the larger eggs. Medium eggs weigh about  $12\frac{1}{2}$  percent, or  $1/8$ , less than large eggs, and small eggs weigh approximately 25 percent, or  $1/4$ , less than large eggs.

Comparison of prices of eggs of different sizes must be made of eggs within the same grade. The table given below shows how values in Grade A eggs of different sizes may be compared.

#### Comparative Values in Grade A Eggs, Based on Weight

<u>When Large Grade A Eggs, with a minimum weight of 24 oz. per dozen, cost</u>	<u>Medium-sized Grade A Eggs, with a minimum weight of 21 oz. per dozen, are as good or a better value at</u>	<u>And Small Grade A Eggs, with a minimum weight of 18 oz. per dozen, are as good or a better value at</u>
<u>Cents</u>	<u>Cents</u>	<u>Cents</u>
46 - 50	40 - 44	34 - 38
51 - 55	45 - 48	38 - 41
56 - 60	49 - 52	42 - 45
61 - 65	53 - 57	46 - 49
66 - 70	58 - 61	50 - 52
71 - 75	62 - 66	53 - 56
76 - 80	66 - 70	57 - 60
81 - 85	71 - 74	61 - 64
86 - 90	75 - 79	64 - 68
91 - 95	80 - 83	68 - 71

The homemaker may well make similar price comparisons of eggs of the different sizes within other grades.

Comparing the price of eggs of the same size (large, for example) but of different qualities (Grade AA, A, B) is also worth while. For instance, such a comparison may show that Grade B and Grade C eggs are priced as much as from 10 to 15 cents a dozen lower than higher quality eggs of the same weight.

Shell color also may affect price, but it does not affect the food value, flavor, or interior quality of the egg. In some markets white shell eggs may cost from 5 to 10 cents a dozen more than brown eggs, or than a mixture of brown and white. In other sections brown eggs are more in demand and bring higher prices. Yet there is no advantage to the consumer in paying a premium for shell color.

### Checking on Interior Quality

The consumer can check on interior quality by breaking an egg into a flat saucer or plate and noting these points: An egg of AA or A quality has a large proportion of firm white, standing up well around the yolk. The yolk itself is round and upstanding. Eggs of lower quality, B and C grades, just as good for many uses, have a smaller proportion of thick white, or no thick white at all. When broken out, the egg white spreads out thinly over a large area. The yolk is somewhat flattened, and it may break easily.

There seems to be no difference in food value between eggs of the different qualities. There may be differences in flavor and palatability, and there usually are differences in price and in the uses made of the eggs. For instance, the higher quality, more expensive eggs, with their firm whites and upstanding yolks, are especially desirable for poaching, frying, and cooking in the shell. Eggs of the two lower grades may be used to advantage as scrambled eggs, in baking, and in sauces and salad dressings. Many families find that it pays to buy Grade B or Grade C eggs for general cooking purposes.

### Caring for Eggs in the Home

Whatever quality of eggs selected, the thrifty homemaker protects that quality by placing eggs in her refrigerator as quickly as possible after purchase. She does not leave them in a hot car while on a shopping tour, or in a hot kitchen while sorting other groceries. When she begins to prepare a meal or gets ready to bake a cake, she takes out of the refrigerator only as many eggs as she needs. To prevent the eggs from losing moisture, absorbing flavors, and losing quality, the homemaker puts them in a covered container in a clean, cold refrigerator.

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"Know the Eggs You Buy," a new color chart, features 3 consumer guides for buying eggs: Read the label, consider weight, and consider quality.

This educational chart is available in 2 sizes. The large size, 30 x 45 inches, is suitable for classroom or study-group use, or for posting on office walls and in retail stores; the small size, 11-3/4 x 17-1/2 inches, is for distribution to individual consumers.

In ordering from the Information Branch, Production and Marketing Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C., ask for the chart KNOW THE EGGS YOU BUY, and specify "large" or "small" size.